

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets make changes to Figs. 22-25 and replaces the original sheets with Figs. 22-25.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Figs. 22-25 are amended. Support for new Figs. 22-25 can be found in the specification at, for example, page 15, lines 5-18 and shown in the original Figs. 22-25. No new matter is added.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiners Mai and Rodriguez at the interview held October 25, 2007, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicant's record of the interview. Specifically, Figs. 22-25 are amended to comply with the Examiners' helpful suggestions made during the interview.

Claims 1 and 2 are objected to for informalities. As agreed during the personal interview, the amendments to claims 1 and 2 filed in the October 12 Amendment overcome the objection. Applicant thus respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection.

Claims 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for lack of enablement. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

During the personal interview, the Examiners agreed that "wherein the slots are T-shaped," as recited in claim 9, and "wherein the slots are oblique with respect to the axis of the connecting part," as recited in claim 11, are supported by the specification but are not sufficiently shown in the Figures. As discussed during the personal interview, replacement Figs. 22-25 that more clearly show these features, overcome the 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph rejection. In addition, it was agreed during the personal interview that these new drawings do not add new matter. Applicant thus respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 1-6 and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Sutter (U.S. Patent No. 5,947,733). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As agreed during the personal interview, Sutter does not disclose the claimed features of independent claim 1. As agreed during the personal interview, for example, Sutter does not teach or suggest "positioning of the tool ... until the hollow intermediate connecting part clips onto an external complementary part of the implantable element," as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, for at least these reasons, independent claim 1 is patentable over Sutter. Claims 2-6 and 13-16 variously depend from independent claim 1, which is now believed to be patentable. As such, dependent claims 2-6 and 13-16 are also believed to be patentable for at least their dependency on independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicant thus respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 7-12 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Sutter in view of Gervais (U.S. Patent No. 7,160,109). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Gervais does not remedy the deficiencies of Sutter. Gervais is only cited by the Office Action for its alleged teaching of a connecting part made of plastic and/or metal and a connecting part comprising deformable slots.

Claims 7-12 and 17 depend from independent claim 1, which is now believed to be patentable. As such, dependent claims 7-12 and 17 are also believed to be patentable for at least their dependency on independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicant thus respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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WPB:PTM/hs

Date: December 3, 2007  
Attachments: Replacement Sheets for Figs. 22-25

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